



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## **Administrative Policies and Procedures: 11.5**

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### **Subject: Psychological and Educational Assessment of Youth In Departmental Treatment Facilities**

Supersedes: DCS 11.5, 12/01/00

**Local Policy: No**  
**Local Procedures: No**  
**Training Required: No**

**Approved by:**

*Page D. Walley, Ph.D.*

**Effective date: 12/01/00**

**Revised date: 11/01/02**

### **Application**

To All Department of Children's Services Youth Development Center and Community Residential Facilities Employees.

**Authority:** TCA 37-5-106

### **Policy**

For all youth in DCS facilities, education, treatment, and placement decisions shall be based in part on the results of standardized psychological and educational assessment procedures that conform to current professional standards and Tennessee state laws.

### **Procedures**

#### **A. Qualifications for test users**

Standardized test(s) and assessment materials must be administered only by individuals who are qualified to do so.

##### **1. Requirements**

Individuals who administer, score, interpret, and otherwise use any test or assessment instrument must meet the professional standards and qualifications noted in

- ◆ The test publisher's catalog;
- ◆ The *standards for educational and psychological testing*;

- ♦ The current *Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards* published by the Tennessee Department of Education, and
- ♦ Tennessee state laws pertaining to the practice of psychology.

## **2. Professional licensing**

Psychologists, psychological examiners, and school psychologists who test DCS youth must be certified or licensed by the Tennessee Board of Examiners in Psychology or the Tennessee State Department of Education in accordance with Tennessee state law(s).

## **3. Approval for paraprofessionals**

- a) Upon certification through DCS departmental volunteer services, graduate student trainees in accredited graduate school programs of clinical, counseling, or school psychology must first obtain approval from the Mental Health Coordinator or designee from DCS Central Office before using standardized tests and assessment materials with DCS youth. They must also be under the supervision of a psychologist certified or licensed by the Tennessee Board of examiners in Psychology or the Tennessee State Department of Education in accordance with Tennessee state law(s).
- b) Paraprofessionals (i.e., persons other than psychologists, school psychologists, and psychological examiners) must first obtain approval from the Mental Health Coordinator or designee for DCS Central Office before using standardized tests and assessment materials with DCS youth.
- c) All persons seeking approval must have a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree, at minimum.
- d) Paraprofessionals must receive training that is approved by the Mental Health Coordinator or designee for DCS Central Office for each standardized test or assessment procedure that they administer to DCS youth.
- e) Paraprofessionals must not construe permission to administer one test or procedure as permission to administer any other.

## **B. Decisions about placement and**

### **1. Appropriate qualifications**

**treatment**

Only individuals who meet the above conditions, to include appropriate training, experience and approval to ***interpret*** standardized tests may make decisions about placement and treatment.

**2. Placement and treatment recommendations**

All decisions regarding placement and treatment must incorporate all available information and cannot be based upon any single standardized test or measure.

**3. Standardized tests**

Staff may use standardized tests, either group type or individual, as one method of determining the intellectual functioning, academic achievement level, vocational/pre-vocational skills, and general educational needs of each youth.

**4. Clinical interview/testing**

Staff may use a clinical interview and/or test(s) to assess personality and mental status for each youth.

**5. Results of previous testing**

- a) Because too frequent testing can yield invalid results, DCS staff must make prompt and diligent efforts to obtain and review the results of previous testing.
- b) Those results must be shared with appropriate mental health professionals.

**6. Testing for possibly disabled youth**

Staff must refer or evaluate each youth suspected or known to be handicapped in accordance with the procedures and guidelines stated in the current edition of the *Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards* by the Tennessee State Department of Education.

**7. Assessment of mentally retarded youth**

Staff must use standardized measures of adaptive behavior in the assessment of youth suspected or known to be educationally or clinically mentally retarded.

**8. Test result validity**

- a) Staff must not consider the results from tests classified as group tests valid for more than twelve months

following the date of administration.

- b) Staff must not consider the results from tests that internal indicators show invalid results or are otherwise unreliable.

## **Forms**

None

## **Collateral Documents**

*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*

*Tennessee Department of Education Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards*

## **ACA Standards**

3-JTS-5B-07

3-JTS-5D-05

3-JRCF-4C-05